

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

**Environmental Assessment
DOI-BLM-NV-S010-2010-0105-EA**

N-87303, N-87303-01

DRAFT

**Recreation and Public Purpose Lease and/or Conveyance
For a Park Consisting of Two Soccer Fields and Related Facilities**

APPLICANT

Clark County, Nevada

LOCATION

**By Henrie Road and State Highway 168 in the Unincorporated Town of Moapa,
Nevada**

PREPARING OFFICE

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Las Vegas Field Office
4701 N Torrey Pines
Las Vegas, Nevada 89130
702-515-5000**



Environmental Assessment
Recreation and Public Purpose Lease and/or Conveyance for a Park
Identifying Information:

DOI-BLM-NV-S010-2010-0105-EA

Title, EA number, and type of project:

Recreation and Public Purpose Lease and/or Conveyance for a Park

Location of Proposed Action:

Located by Henrie Road and State Highway 168 in the Unincorporated Town of Moapa, Nevada

LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

Mount Diablo Meridian, T. 14 S., R. 66 E., sec. 34, N $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$.
containing 15 acres, more or less.

Name and Location of Preparing Office:

Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Las Vegas Field Office
4701 N. Torrey Pines
Las Vegas, NV 89130

Identify the subject function code, lease, serial, or case file number:

Casefile numbers: N-87303, N-87303-01

Applicant Name:

Clark County, Nevada

Purpose and Need for Action:

The purpose is to expand the existing Ron Lewis Rural Park by 15 acres to include soccer fields. The project will satisfy the Recreation and Public Purpose Act of June 14, 1926, as amended (43 U.S.C. 869 et. seq.). The project is needed to fulfill the expanding public recreational needs in the community and local area.

Scoping, Public Involvement and Issues:

The park and soccer fields will fulfill recreational needs for local residents of the Unincorporated Town of Moapa, Nevada.

The project is allowed per the Recreation and Public Purpose Act of June 14, 1926, as amended (43 U.S.C. 869 et. seq.).

Stipulations will be attached to the lease which will include conservation and protection of the natural resources, cultural resources, Threatened and Endangered (T&E) Species, and the environment.

This proposal has been reviewed by Bureau of Land Management (BLM) resource team members. Their comments and evaluations are included in this environmental assessment.

A summary of this EA is available for review by the public on the internet on the DOI.GOV website under NEPA number: DOI-BLM-NV-S010-2010-0105-EA.

Proposed Action and Alternatives

Description of the Proposed Action:

Clark County has applied for a 15 acre Recreation and Public Purposes Act (R&PP) lease and/or subsequent conveyance to expand the existing Ron Lewis Town Park with soccer fields within the unincorporated Town of Moapa, Nevada. Clark County proposes to construct a park area consisting of two soccer fields. Related facilities include parking lots, landscaping, lighting, walkways, drainage, irrigation, restrooms, concessions, utilities and ancillary improvements.

The park will be located north and east of the Perkins Elementary School on Henrie Road run by the Clark County School District, and north of the existing Ron Lewis Town Park.

Picture below depicts the proposed R&PP area in yellow.



Description of Alternatives Analyzed in Detail:

No Action Alternative: Adoption of the no action alternative would negate the recreational benefits of the R&PP Act and result in the land remaining as it presently exists. Recreational opportunities would continue to be limited for the local residents.

Alternatives Considered but not Analyzed in Detail

None

Conformance

This proposed action is in conformance with the Las Vegas Resource Management Plan approved on October 5, 1998. The land described in this proposal is within a designated disposal boundary. The plan has been reviewed and it is determined the proposed action is in conformance with land use plan decision LD-1 and LD-1-d under the authority of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), as amended (43 U.S.C. 1701 et. seq.) The public lands are being disposed of in accordance with the Recreation and Public Purposes Act of June 14, 1926, as amended, (43 U.S.C. 869 et seq.).

Affected Environment:

SUPPLEMENTAL AUTHORITIES

| Supplemental Authority | Not Present | Present/Not Affected | Present/May be Affected | Rationale |
|---|-------------|----------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Air Quality | | X | | Ensure DAQEM dust permit obtained when construction begins and is in compliance throughout the duration of the project(s). |
| Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) | X | | | The proposed project area is not within an ACEC or any critical desert tortoise habitat. |
| Cultural/Historical | | | X | The area will require a Class III cultural resource inventory of the area of potential effect (APE) as it has never been evaluated for cultural resources. See comments below in EA. |
| Paleontological Resources | | X | | Fossil bearing strata are present in the area, but the geological map in Longwell et al. (1965) shows only alluvium at the proposed park location. |
| Environmental Justice | | X | | Any minority or low income group present within the project area would not be disproportionately impacted by health or environmental effects. The project is not displacing any existing homes or buildings, nor generating any wastes that could contribute to degradation of the community. |
| Farmlands Prime or Unique | X | | | Proposed action is not within any prime or unique farmlands. |
| Noxious Weeds/Invasive Non-native Species | | X | | Impacts from construction and maintenance may introduce and exacerbate weed populations, with potential spread to adjacent lands. All stipulations and mitigation measures for weed control standard to the Southern Nevada District Office apply. |

| Supplemental Authority | Not Present | Present/Not Affected | Present/May be Affected | Rationale |
|--|-------------|----------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Native American Religious Concerns | X | | | Depending on the results of the Class III inventory there may be Native American concerns. The results of the Class III inventory found no archaeological or ethnohistoric sites within the 15-acre parcel selected for the park. |
| Floodplains | | X | | Located outside FEMA designated floodplain. CCRFCD approved rough grading work and determined that no impacts to downstream flooding would occur. |
| Wetlands/Riparian | X | | | Proposed action does not occur in wetland/riparian zone. |
| Threatened, Endangered or Candidate Plant Species | X | | | Not present. |
| Threatened, Endangered or Candidate Animal Species/ Sensitive Species. | | | X | Impacts addressed in EA below. |
| Migratory Birds | | | X | Impacts addressed in EA below. |
| Waste - Hazardous/ Solid | X | | | Please include standard Hazmat stipulations in the lease. |
| Water Quality | | | X | This project will impact the local run-off conditions and surface flow characteristics and needs to be evaluated in detail within this EA. |
| Wild & Scenic Rivers | X | | | Not present. |
| Wilderness (Study Area) | X | | | The proposed action is not located within or adjacent to any designated Wilderness or WSA's. |

| Supplemental Authority | Not Present | Present/Not Affected | Present/May be Affected | Rationale |
|--|-------------|----------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Forests and Rangelands (HFRA only)/Woodlands | | X | | Approximately 1 acre of the proposed project site contains mesquite trees which will be destroyed as a result of the proposed action. Additionally, cactus and yucca may be present within the project impact area. Cactus and yucca are considered government property and are regulated under the Nevada BLM forestry program. The project proponent will need to work with the BLM botanist prior to the start of any construction to salvage or hold a salvage sale within the proposed lease. |
| Human Health and Safety | | X | | Need to follow safety precautions and best management practices during construction of the park. The park needs to be constructed according to County and Federal safety requirements for children's playgrounds and park buildings. |

Other resources of the human environment that have been considered for this environmental assessment (EA) are listed in the table below. Elements that may be affected are further described in the EA. Rationale for those elements that would not be affected by the proposed action and alternative is listed in the table below.

| Other Resources | Not Present | Present/Not Affected | Present/May be Affected | Rationale |
|---------------------------|-------------|----------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Livestock Grazing | X | | | Proposed action is not within an active livestock grazing zone. |
| Green House Gas Emissions | | X | | Currently there are no emission limits for suspected Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, and no technically defensible methodology for predicting potential climate changes from GHG emissions. However, there are, and will continue to be, several efforts to address GHG emissions from federal activities, including BLM authorized uses. |

| Other Resources | Not Present | Present/Not Affected | Present/May be Affected | Rationale |
|---------------------------|-------------|----------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Geology/Mineral Resources | | X | | .There are 2 mining (association placer) claims in the vicinity of the park area held by Delorda (mining company) Shrieber (claimant). The claims are the Dandy #1 & #2 and are located just south of the highway. There is a validity exam currently being conducted on the claims that have not been finalized or contested. |
| Socio-Economic Values | | X | | This project will not disproportionately impact social or economic values since the project will not be creating income to affect current economic or social conditions. |
| Soils/Hydrology | | | X | Soils: Local soils, including areas with desert pavement, will be significantly altered, potentially leading to increases in local erosion. These impacts need to be evaluated in detail within this EA. Hydrology: A technical drainage study conducted by Walker Engineering found there to be limited and acceptable impacts to the hydrologic conditions. |
| Vegetation | | X | | There are no known occurrences of or habitat for BLM sensitive species within the proposed project area. Therefore, no impacts to BLM sensitive plant species are expected. |
| Visual Resources | | X | | The proposed action is within visual resource management Class III, which allows for moderate levels of change to the existing environment. Since the adjacent areas are already developed in a similar manner, the expansion of the park is not expected to dominate the view of the casual observer. No Issues. |

| Other Resources | Not Present | Present/Not Affected | Present/May be Affected | Rationale |
|-----------------------|-------------|----------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Recreation | | X | | Casual use OHV will be displaced but not to a measurable level. |
| Fuels/Fire Management | | X | | Fire restrictions are generally enacted between May 15 and October 1. Compliance with fire restrictions is mandatory while fire restrictions are in place. Specific activities may be waived on a case by case basis by a line officer after review and approval by the Fire Management Officer. No further issues.. |
| Wildlife | | | X | Impacts addressed in EA below. |

Cultural Resources:

The National Historical Preservation Act (NHPA), efforts to evaluate cultural resources were conducted according to 36 CFR 800.4. The BLM archaeologist completed an existing data review that demonstrated the area of potential effect (APE) has never been evaluated for cultural resources. Due to the high sensitivity of the Moapa area for cultural sites, a Class III cultural resource inventory is required.

Wildlife:

The proposed project area supports wildlife characteristic of the Mojave desert. Biological diversity varies according to topography, plant community, and proximity to water, soil type, and season. Several common species of reptiles that may be present in the vicinity of the proposed project site may include the western whip-tail (*Cnemidophorus tigris*), desert iguana (*Dipsosaurus dorsalis*), side-blotched lizard (*Uta stansburiana*), zebra-tail lizard (*Callisaurus draconoides*), desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*), western shovel-nosed snake (*Chionactis occipitalis*) and garter snake (*Thamnophis* sp.). Common bird species that may be present in the vicinity of the proposed project site may include the rock wren (*Salpinctes obsoletus*), black-throated sparrow (*Amphispiza quinquestriata*), turkey vulture (*Cathartes aura*), common raven (*Corvus corax*), phainopepla (*Phainopepla nitens*), red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), and western burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia hypugaea*). Common mammal species include the black-tailed hare (*Lepus californicus*), the desert cottontail (*Sylvilagus audubonii*), coyote (*Canis latrans*), badger (*Taxidea taxus*), kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis*) and many species of rodents.

BLM Sensitive Species:

Western burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia hypugaea*) The Western burrowing owl is a diurnal bird of prey specialized for grassland and shrubsteppe habitats in western North America. The owls are widely distributed throughout the Americas and can be found from central Alberta, Canada to Tierra del Fuego in South America. Burrowing owl habitat typically consists of open, dry, treeless areas on plains, prairies, and desert floors. Burrowing owls most frequently use mammal burrows created by other animals such as prairie dogs (*Cynomys* spp.), ground squirrels (*Spermophilus* spp.), coyotes (*Canis latrans*) or desert tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*).

The burrows are used for nesting, roosting, cover, and caching prey. In recent decades, the range and species count have been declining primarily due to agricultural, industrial, and urban development that reduce burrow availability. Phainopepla (Phainopepla nitens) The phainopepla is a song bird of glossy black coloration in males and grey coloration in females. Both have a slender tail and a crested head. The bird resides in the desert scrub, mesquite, juniper and oak woodland, tall brush, riparian woodland and orchards. During spring breeding season its range includes central California, southern Nevada, southern Utah, southern New Mexico, and western Texas, south to southern Baja California, and central mainland of Mexico. It winters in southern California, southern Nevada, central Arizona, southern New Mexico, western and southern Texas. The population of the phainopepla is secure worldwide, but the modest population in Nevada has made it a NNHP and State of Nevada Species of Concern.

Migratory Birds:

Under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (MBTA) and subsequent amendments (16 U.S.C. 703-711), it is unlawful to take, kill, or possess migratory birds. A list of the protected bird species can be found in 50 C.F.R. §10.13. The list of birds protected under this regulation is extensive and the project site has potential to support many of these species, including the BLM sensitive species the western burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*). Typically, the breeding season is when these species are most sensitive to disturbance, which generally occurs from March 15 through July 30.

Threatened and Endangered Candidate Animal Species (T&E):

Threatened and endangered species are placed on a federal list by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and receive protection under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. The only T species known to occur in the vicinity of the project area is the threatened desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*). In the Mojave region, the desert tortoise occurs primarily on flats and bajadas with soils ranging from sand to sandy-gravel characterized by scattered shrubs and abundant inter-shrub space for herbaceous plant growth. They are also found on rocky terrain and slopes. Historical survey data indicates that the area surrounding the project site is low density desert tortoise habitat, Area C.

Water Quality:

This project will impact the local run-off conditions and surface flow characteristics and needs to be evaluated in detail within this EA.

Soils:

Local soils, including areas with desert pavement, will be significantly altered, potentially leading to increases in local erosion. These impacts need to be evaluated in detail within this EA.

Environmental Effects:

Cultural Resources:

Due to the high sensitivity of the Moapa area for cultural sites, a Class III cultural resource inventory is required. The contractor must hold a current NV State Cultural Resource Use Permit and submit (1) a fieldwork authorization; and, (2) a research design commensurate with the scope of the undertaking to the Las Vegas Field Office. If any cultural sites are discovered and determined eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places then these sites must be mitigated prior to the BLM granting a notice to proceed for surface disturbing activities. Mitigation must follow an approved treatment plan, which will be developed in consultation with the BLM and the NV State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

Knight and Leavitt completed a Class III Cultural Resource Inventory and results are detailed in BLM Cultural Resource report 5-2656. There are no cultural sites on the original 15 acres that the County had requested. No historic properties will be affected if the original 15 acres are granted to the County as an R&PP lease.

Wildlife:

Wildlife species in the general area include small mammals, rodents, birds and reptiles. These species would be displaced as lands are disturbed within the project area. The primary direct impact of the proposed action on wildlife would be killing or maiming of ground dwelling animals during construction and the loss of habitat. Additional impacts associated with the mortality from vehicular traffic may also be realized upon the completion of construction and subsequent use of the project area.

BLM Sensitive Species:

Western burrowing owl (*Athene cuniculari hypugaea*) & Phainopepla (*Phainopepla nitens*) The direct impacts of the proposed action on phainopepla and western burrowing owl would be loss of nesting habitat and forage, mortality and harassment of individual animals, and decrease in habitat value of adjacent remaining "wildland" areas due to increased human activity in the area. Land containing cat-claw acacia habitat occupied by phainopepla would be lost once the native vegetation is cleared, reducing the winter and nesting habitat for the species in Clark County. These species are both protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the proponent will be required to adhere to above mentioned mitigation measures.

Migratory Birds:

Migratory birds, including the BLM sensitive species the western burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), may be present on the project site. The proponent will be required to adhere to the following mitigation measures: 1) To prevent undue harm, habitat-altering projects or portions of projects should be scheduled outside bird breeding season. In upland desert habitats and ephemeral washes containing upland species, the season generally occurs between March 15th - July 30th. 2) If a project that may alter any breeding habitat has to occur during the breeding season, then a qualified biologist must survey the area for nests prior to commencement of construction activities. This shall include burrowing and ground nesting species in addition to those nesting in vegetation. If any active nests (containing eggs or young) are found, an appropriately-sized buffer area must be avoided until the young birds fledge.

Threatened and Endangered Candidate Animal Species (T&E):

This project will disturb a total of 15.0 acres of tortoise habitat. Since tortoise sign has been found in the vicinity and undisturbed habitat exists in the area, there is potential for tortoises to wander into the project area. If not noticed and avoided during construction, desert tortoises could be either injured or killed (by crushing) or harassed (by being moved out of harm's way).

Water Quality:

This project will impact the local run-off conditions and surface flow characteristics and needs to be evaluated in detail within this EA.

Soils:

Local soils, including areas with desert pavement, will be significantly altered, potentially leading to increases in local erosion. These impacts need to be evaluated in detail within this EA.

Cumulative Impacts

The proposed action is for a park area which will include two soccer fields. The proposal is to extend the existing Ron Lewis Park area to include two soccer fields which will provide recreational activities and park areas for the local residents of the unincorporated Town of Moapa (Town of Moapa). The Town of Moapa is located next to the Moapa Indian Reservation. The park and soccer fields will fulfill the recreational needs of the local community and the nearby Indian Reservation and elementary school. Future impacts should be minimal since the site is located in a residential area, next to an elementary school and a small local park area. Change to the visual site would be minimal, since it would blend in with the existing park, elementary school, and neighboring houses. It would instead, enhance the visual view for the area since the site is presently hilly, with natural drainage washes and scrub brush weeds everywhere.

Tribes, Individuals, Organizations, or Agencies Consulted:

Table 1. List of Persons, Agencies and Organizations Consulted

| Name | Purpose & Authorities for Consultation or Coordination | Findings & Conclusions |
|----------------|---|---|
| Krynn Williams | Clark County Department of Real Property-Applciant | Supports issuance of 15 acre lease/conveyance. |
| | | |

List of Preparers

Table 2. List of Preparers:

| Name | Title | Responsible for the Following Section(s) of this Document |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Brenda Warner | Realty Specialist | Introduction, Purpose and Need, Scoping, Land/Access |
| Dorothy J. Dickey | Realty Specialist | Introduction, Purpose and Need, Scoping, Preparing document, Editing, Finalizing, Land/Access |
| John Evans | Environmental Coordinator | NEPA Coordinator, Environmental Justice |
| Lisa Christianson | Environmental Protection Specialist | Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions |
| Fred Edwards | Botanist | Botanist, Forest Initiative, Healthy (Cactus/Yucca), Threatened, Endangered or Candidate (Plant Species), Vegetation Excluding Listed Species |
| Susanne Rowe | Archaeologist | Cultural Resources, Native American Religious Concerns, Paleontology, |
| Chris Linehan | Recreation Specialist | Recreation |
| Sarah Peterson | Hydrologist | Floodplains, Hydrologic Conditions, Riparian/Wetlands, Soils, Water Resources/Quality (Drinking/Surface/Ground), Wetlands/Riparian Zones, Wild & Scenic Rivers |
| Mark Slaughter | Wildlife Biologist | Fish & Wildlife, Migratory Birds, Threatened, Endangered or Candidate (Animal Species) |
| George Varhalmi | Geologist | Geology/Mineral Resources/Energy Production, |
| Katie Kleinick | Wildlife Biologist | Threatened, Endangered Candidate Plant Species, Woodland, Forestry, Vegetation |
| Nora Caplette | Natural Resource Specialist | Invasive Species/ Noxious Weeds |
| Kirsten Cannon | Public Affairs Specialist | Public Affairs |
| Krystal Johnson | Wildhorse and Burro Specialist | Farmlands, Rangeland Health, Horse & Burro |
| Boris Poff | Hydrologist | Soils, Floodplains, Hydrology, Wetlands, Riparian |
| Lauren Brown | NRS Restoration Ecologist | Visual Resources |
| Sendi Kalcic | Wilderness Planner | Areas with Wilderness Characteristics |